S U R L ' E A U

Op. 25, No. 1

By

EMERSON WHITHORNE

REVISED EDITION WITH FINGERING, PEDALING, PHRASING, GLOSSARY, AND INSTRUCTIVE ANNOTATIONS ON INTERPRETATION AND METHOD OF STUDY

By the COMPOSER

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, FORM AND STRUCTURE AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS

By ALEXANDER HENNEMAN

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SUR L' EAU

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—EMERSON WHITHORNE

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, September 6th, 1884

BY all the auguries of ancestry Emerson Whithorne should be a cosmopolitan. His paternal grandfather, Richard Whithorne, came to America from England when he was twelve years old; at the age of twenty-four he met and married Augusta Stroud, she being directly descended from the New England Emersons, a branch of which family had intermingled with the old Dutch family of Stroud. On his mother's side of the house there had been a curious blending of French and Scotch-Irish blood. So to the staid qualities of Dutch and New England forebears was added the mercurial temperament of Celt and Gaul.

The Emersons had been intensely musical through many generations, while, according to Grove's dictionary of music, there lived in England, in the 16th century, a Thomas Whythorne, who composed 'songes of sundrie sortes, that is to say, some long, some short, some solemne and some pleasant or mery'. A portrait of Thomas Whythorne painted in 1569, is in the possession of Dr. W. H. Cummings, of London.

The first strong musical impressions which Emerson Whithorne received were in his childhood days, at his paternal grandmother's farm-house, where his three Dutch grand-uncles and an inspired old fiddler, named Pike, played music both serious and popular on the strings foursome. True to the custom of those spacious days the double bass took the place of the 'cello, and marvelously did ponderous Leander Stroud play that unwieldy instrument. On long winter evenings, with chestnuts popping on the hearth and cider foaming in the mugs, did those four sturdy Civil War veterans regale the country-folk with music.

It was not until his tenth year that Emerson Whithorne was able to prevail upon his father to let him study music. Whithorne the elder thought musicians a mendicant breed, and he had no desire that his son should follow that forlorn profession. Indeed, for two years no piano playing was allowed in the Whithorne home and all practising must needs be done at the residence of his teacher. His first instructor in the gentle art of music was a cousin, pupil, and devoted disciple of Wilson G. Smith, the well-known composer and pedagogue. The following year his musical studies were supervised by Joseph Hartmann, organist of Saint Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Cleveland. The study of the pianoforte was continued and harmony was taken up, the boy working so diligently and progressing so rapidly that he was engaged to make two summer Chatauqua tours of the western and southern states in his sixteenth and seventeenth years.

Unfortunately on his return from his travels he found his friend and teacher had died, and it was decided that the young musician should continue his musical education with James H. Rogers, a composer of national reputation. Two years were spent with that excellent teacher, when Rogers advised his pupil to go to Leschetizky in Vienna. Again there were strong parental objections, but these were finally overcome and the journey to Europe was undertaken. In Vienna, Whithorne was two years with Theodor Leschetizky, also studying counterpoint with Robert Fuchs. After a short period with Fuchs, that master encouraged him to concentrate upon composition. He extended to the young American his friendship. Every Sunday during the winter seasons he included him in his mountain-climbing parties. What happy days were those; the youth stammering his newly acquired German and the dear old white-locked composer attempting to speak English. Fuchs had been an intimate friend of Brahms, and it may be imagined with what eagerness the young man drank in knowledge from a source so near the actual fountain-head.

The summer of 1906 was spent tramping across the Salzkammergut and Switzerland to Chamonix, in Savoy. An amusing interlude was afforded by a journey to London where the youth found himself penniless, remaining in that dubious state for two weeks without friends or assistance, seriously worried at the non-arrival of a cheque that had gone astray. After a short sojourn in northern Italy—basking in Venice under a September moon—Whithorne returned to Vienna. Arriving there he found that his old colleagues had gone; all were new faces. So he betook himself to Berlin and there studied pianoforte with that famous pianist, Artur Schnabel. It is to be feared that many poor compositions were written during that season; certainly pianoforte practice was neglected.

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It was in this winter of 1906-1907 that the young musician met that talented pianist, Ethel Leginska. He went to London in the Spring of 1907, and married Miss Leginska the following July. In September, 1908, there was born to this youthful artist pair a son, Cedric Villiers Whithorne. Until November, 1914, Whithorne made London his home. There he composed, taught pianoforte and theory, and wrote musical criticisms for the *Pall Mall Gazette.* His special music to Lawrence Irving's Japanese play, *Typhoon,* did more to make his name known in England than any other work he had written. He composed all the music for the famous Shakespeare Ball, which was organized by Lady Randolph Churchill—then Mrs. George Cornwallis West—for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Fund. Lady Randolph Churchill had been studying with Whithorne for a considerable period, and, when in seeking special Elizabethan music, she had been supplied with nothing but musical anachronisms, she appealed to him. The score was written in three days and such was the success of these old English dances that Prince Henry of Prussia asked for the original manuscript, it eventually being played by the marine bands in Germany.

Emerson Whithorne's interest in the orchestra grew out of his friendship with the famous Russian conductor, Safonoff. Then followed the teaching and friendly advice of that well-known composer and conductor, Tcherepnin. Whithorne has composed three large orchestral works—two scores now in Germany, where performances had been arranged with the Gürzenich Orchestra before the war; one of his string quartets has been played in America by the Kneisels, while his piano works and songs are gradually finding their place on the programmes of serious artists in this country. Emerson Whithorne is in every sense a modernist in his composition; his harmonic and rhythmic invention is greater than his melodic talent. Yet with all his seeking for new modes of expression, with all his delving into the music of the Chinese and Japanese, he is not in sympathy with any movement among creators of music which savours of vulgarity or charlatanism.

ESTHETIC IDEA: *Sur l'Eau (On the Water)* suggests the swaying of a boat on gentle waves; and in rhythm with this undulatory movement of waves and boat, a maiden softly sings a simple melody in which her companion soon joins her. So the composition is to be imagined as nature rhythmically expressed by the movement of water, with harmonies of dark sea under sunset-crimsoned sky, and the effect of these natural phenomena on two blissful human beings.

METHOD OF STUDY: It will be observed that throughout this composition the left-hand part seldom diverges from one rhythmic design, and this intentional identity of rhythm, by its very insistence, suggests the sound of regularly lapping waves. As indicated in measures 3, 4, 5, etc., there should be slight *crescendos* and *decrescendos* in the ascending bass figures. The melody enters in the third measure with an effect of syncopation, the D in the melody being played just after the second eighth-note in the left-hand part. The very first statement of this theme must be expressive—replete with feminine tenderness. Where the melody appears in thirds—measures 7 and 8—an F-sharp is introduced on the third beats of the accompaniment in contrast to the G on third beats of measures 3 and 4.

Beginning with m. 13 the melody should be interpreted in a disconnected, half *staccato* manner; the mood is playful in measures 13, 14 and 15. There must be an appreciable increase of tone on the first beats of measures 17 and 19, while the last beats of these measures are to be given softly in order to accentuate the harmonic change. Measures 21 and 22 are again animated in character, the accents in the treble being followed by accents in the bass. The A-flat minor harmony in measures 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 is suddenly succeeded by E-minor harmony in m. 28; this is unexpected, as the E-major harmony would have been much more usual here. The low E-must be played with sufficient tone to sound through two beats of the measure—m. 28—although here the general dynamic character is soft.

There is the building up of a small climax from m. 31 to m. 34, subsiding again in m. 36 until, in the succeeding measure, the wave-like movement is suggested by a subtle syncopation and softly changing harmonies. The student should notice the motive in the bass at the end of m. 37 and the answer in the soprano of the following measure. The alternation between G-major and G-minor in m. 41, is like the play of light on the broken surface of the sea. At the end of m. 43 there is again a motive in the bass, answered by the soprano of the next measure. Now we have four measures in G-minor with very slight harmonic vacillation, for the tonal perspective must present no disturbing elements to distract our attention from the return of the first melody.

Although this melody should be played moderately soft, yet it is to be treated sonorously, with a sustained singing tone. The grace-note on middle C in m. 52, is to be given *forte* as it must sound through the whole measure. The left-hand part of m. 56 may offer difficulties for small hands, but the *rallentando* here introduced allows sufficient time to prepare for the intervals. The sustained G introduced in m. 60 must be clearly heard sounding alone in the last half of m. 62, while the F-sharp in m. 63 passes with a silent change from the thumb of the left hand to the fourth finger of the right hand, leading to the G in the soprano of m. 64.

FORM AND STRUCTURE: This composition is made up of a principal subject and variations in free form. The variations are essentially modern in that they change the principal subject so that its character is altered rhythmically, melodically and harmonically.

After two measures of introduction the principal subject enters in m. 3; this four-measure subject is repeated in measures 7 to 10, inclusive, the melody of the first two measures being treated in thirds, and in measures 9 and 10 contrapuntally. Measures 11 and 12 utilize the same material as measures 1 and 2, forming an interlude before the introduction of an episode,—measures 13 to 20, inclusive. This episode is made up of a four-measure phrase followed by two two-measure phrases.

At m. 21 appears the first variation of the principal subject. The student should compare m. 21 with m. 7, and m. 23 with m. 9. Although a double bar and a change of key are introduced at the end of m. 27, the four-measure phrase does not actually terminate until the succeeding measure. Measures 29 and 30 serve as an interlude.

The second variation of the principal subject makes its appearance in m. 31. The rhythmic characteristics of measures 31 and 32 should be compared with those of measures 21 and 22. An important structural feature is the contraction of what was formerly a four-measure phrase to a three-measure phrase. Compare measures 31—33 with measures 21—24.

Measures 37—46, inclusive, may be considered as a modulatory bridge passage, followed by the regular two-measure interlude,—measures 47 and 48. By careful inspection the student will be able to discover the sources of the material used in the bridge passage; it is all derived from the principal subject.

The return of the principal subject in measures 49 to 56, inclusive, recreates the original mood, as the subject appears in its original form with only slight alterations. The coda enters at m. 57 and consists of eight measures.

HARMONIC ANALYSIS: Key of G-Minor.

In m. 1 the A in the bass may be treated as a passing tone leading to the third of the tonic triad, while the E-flat in the alto may be considered an *appoggiatura* leading to the fifth of the tonic triad. The third beats of measures 3 and 4 suggest subdominant harmony. The harmony of m. 6 is dispersed above the organ-point G; it is clearly the dominant ninth chord with its root in the treble.

Whereas in measures 3 and 4 there is a suggestion of the subdominant triad on the third beats, in measures 7 and 8, the diminished triad appears on the third beat. At the close of the first repetition of the principal subject, in m. 10, we again find dominant ninth harmony over the organ-point G. In m. 17 there occurs a passing modulation with the small major seventh chord on the first beat, the C-minor triad on the second beat, and the dominant seventh chord of G on the third beat.

In m. 23, third beat, we have the small diminished seventh chord on the second degree of A-flat minor. The harmonic reading of m. 24 is as follows: First beat, A-flat minor triad; second beat, diminished triad on second degree of A-flat minor; third beat, E-flat major triad. The third beat of m. 25 introduces a triad on the seventh degree of A-flat minor with a raised fourth—D-natural. The F-flat in the soprano of m. 27 is an enharmonic common tone, related to E, the tonic of E-minor in m. 28.

We now find an instance of dual tonality. The fundamental in measures 29 and 30 (G) descends to its tonic (C) in m. 31; and the triad of C-major, in the bass of m. 31, has above it, in the treble, the E-minor triad followed by the dominant seventh chord of E, the C sounding below as organ-point. The same harmonic combination occurs in m. 32.

Finally, in m. 34 the key of E-minor is firmly established. The chord on the third beat of measures 34 and 35 may be read as the dominant ninth chord with the E organ-point below. In m. 38 (third beat) the diminished seventh chord leads naturally into E-minor in the following measure. The alternating major and minor of m. 41, and the interluding seventh chord with lowered third (on the dominant), prepare the ear for the progression to G-minor in m. 43. There is nothing more of harmonic significance until m. 57 where the G-minor triad is followed by the triad on the sixth degree—first two-eighths of second and third beats—and the triad on the third degree—last eighth of second and third beats. The same plan is followed in m. 58. The chord in m. 63 is a seventh chord with subdominant (C) as root, and the F-sharp treated as a suspension resolving to G.

SUR L' EAU

GLOSSARY

NAMES

Whithorne,	pronounced,	Whĭ-thorn.
Hartmann,	"	Härt-män.
Leschetizky,	"	Lĕ-shĕ-tĭts-kĭ.
Fuchs,	"	Foox.
Salzkammergut,	"	Sälts-käm-mer-goot.
Chamonix,	"	Shä-mō-nē.
Artur Schnabel,	"	Ar-toor Shnä-bl.
Gürzenich,	"	Gooēr-tsĕ-nĭkh.
Safonoff,	"	Sȧ-fō-nȯf.
Kneisel,	"	Knī-sĕl.
Tcherepnin,	"	Chĕ-rĕp-nēen.
Leginska,	"	Lĕ-jĭn-skä.
Sur l'Eau,	"	Sooēr Lō.

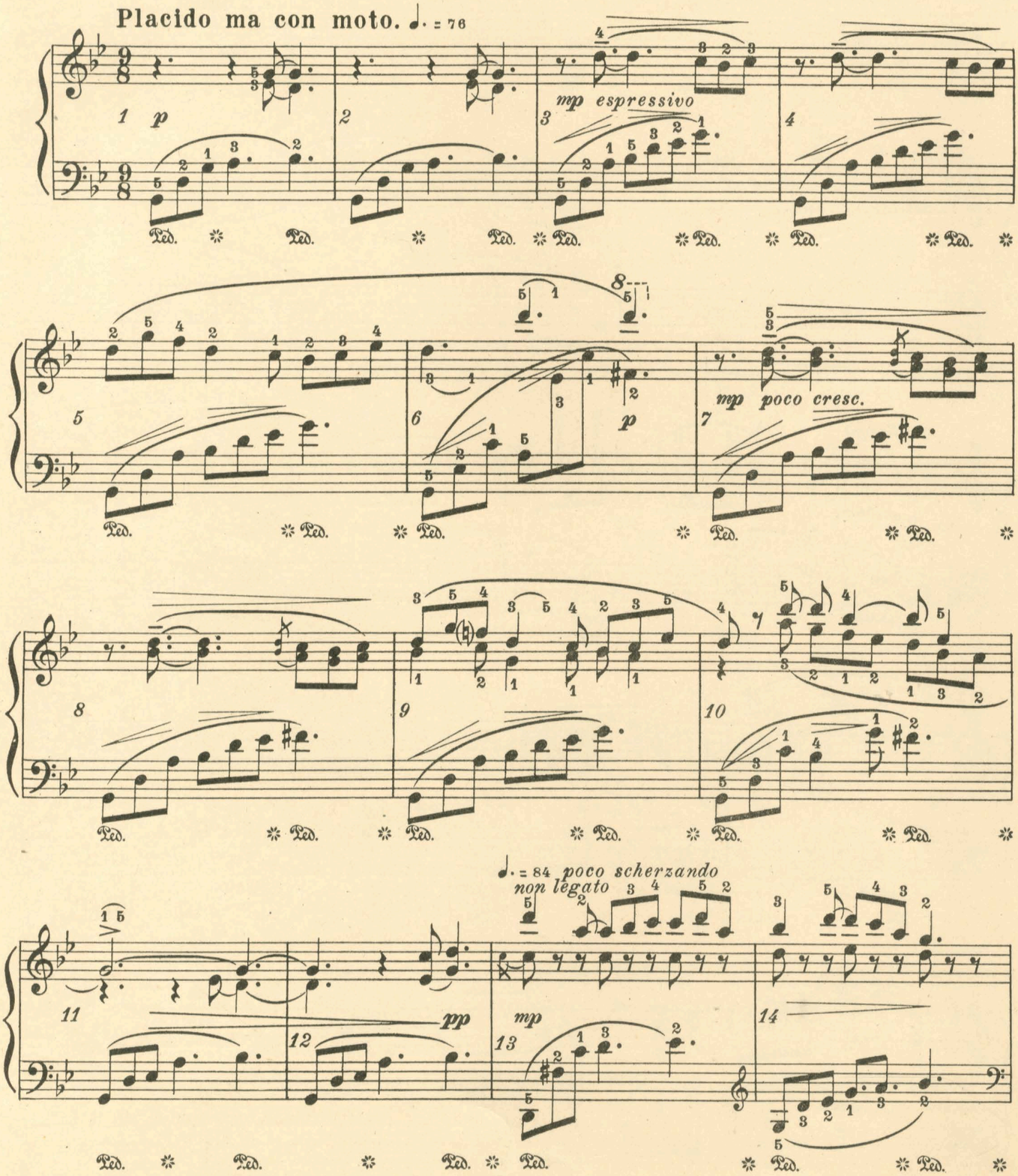
TERMS

placido ma con moto,	pronounced,	plä-tshēe-dō mä cȯn mō-tō, placidly but with motion.
espressivo,	"	ĕs-prĕs-sēe-vō, expressively.
poco cresc. (crescendo),	"	pō-cō crĕ-shĕn-dō, increasing in tone a little.
scherzando,	"	skĕr-tsän-dō, playfully, jestingly.
subito,	"	soo-bē-tō, suddenly.
riten. (ritenuto),	"	rē-tĕ-noo-tō, detained, slower.
a tempo,	"	ä tĕm-pō, in time.
sonoro,	"	sō-nō-rō, sonorously, resonantly.
rubato,	"	roo-bä-tō, "robbed", with freedom in interpretation of time values.
una corda,	"	oo-nä cor-dä, one string, (soft pedal).
dim. (diminuendo),	"	dē-mē-noo-ĕn-dō, diminishing in tone.
accel. (accelerando) molto,	"	ä-tshĕl-lĕ-rän-dō mōl-tō, greatly increasing the tempo.
rall. (rallentando),	"	räl-lĕn-tän-dō, slackening the time.
ten. (tenuto),	"	tā-noo-tō, held, sustained.
non legato,	"	nōn lĕ-gä-tō, not smooth, disconnected.
decrescendo,	"	dā-crĕ-shĕn-dō, decreasing in tone.
staccato,	"	stäc-cä-tō, short, detached.
appoggiatura,	"	ȧp-pȯd-jē-ä-too-rä, a tone preceding (leaning upon) a chordic tone, a whole step above or half step below.
coda,	"	cō-dä, a musical sentence added at the end of a composition to make a more complete and effective termination.

Sur l'Eau

Edited by the Composer

EMERSON WHITHORNE. Op. 25, No. 1.



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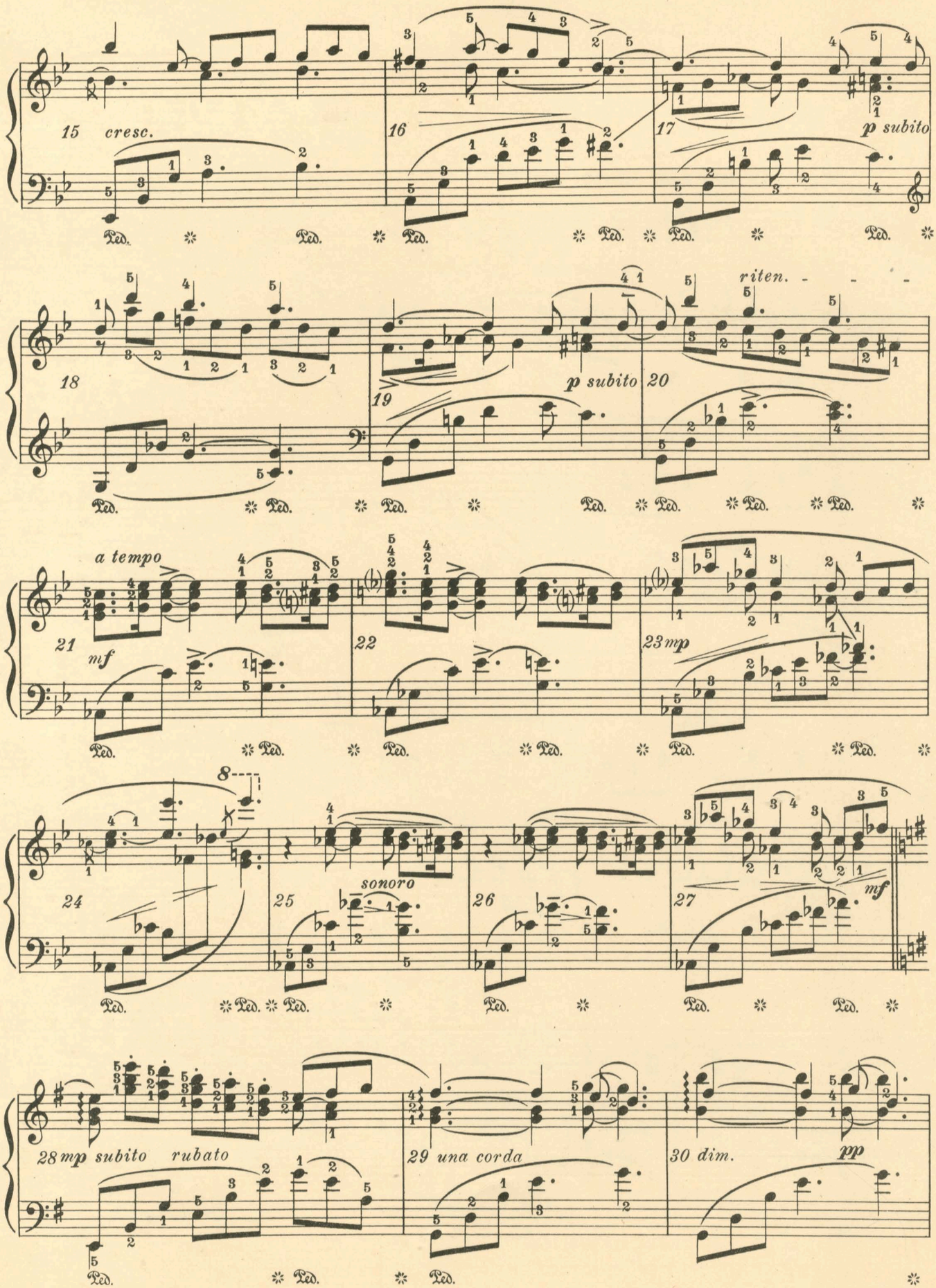
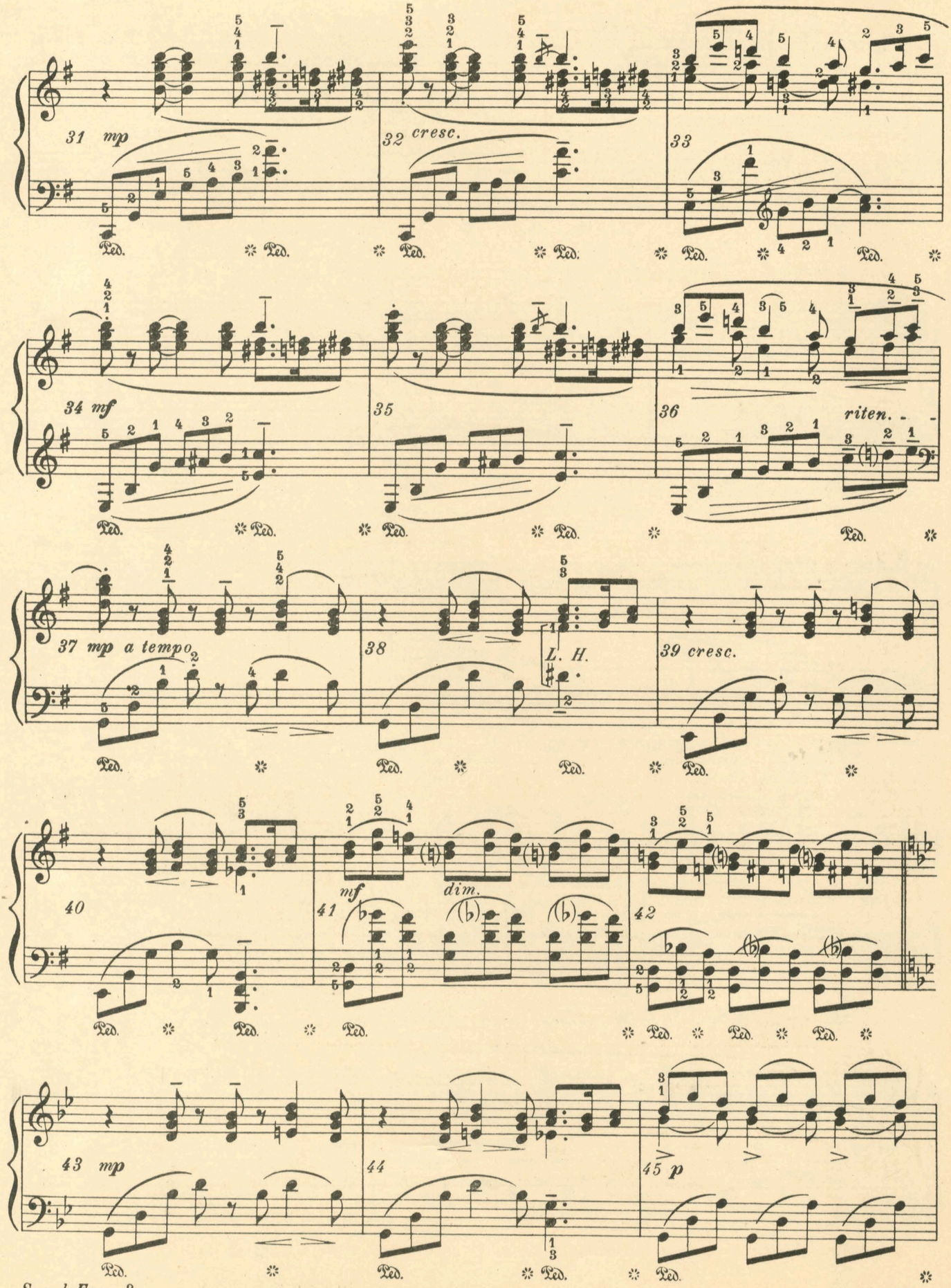
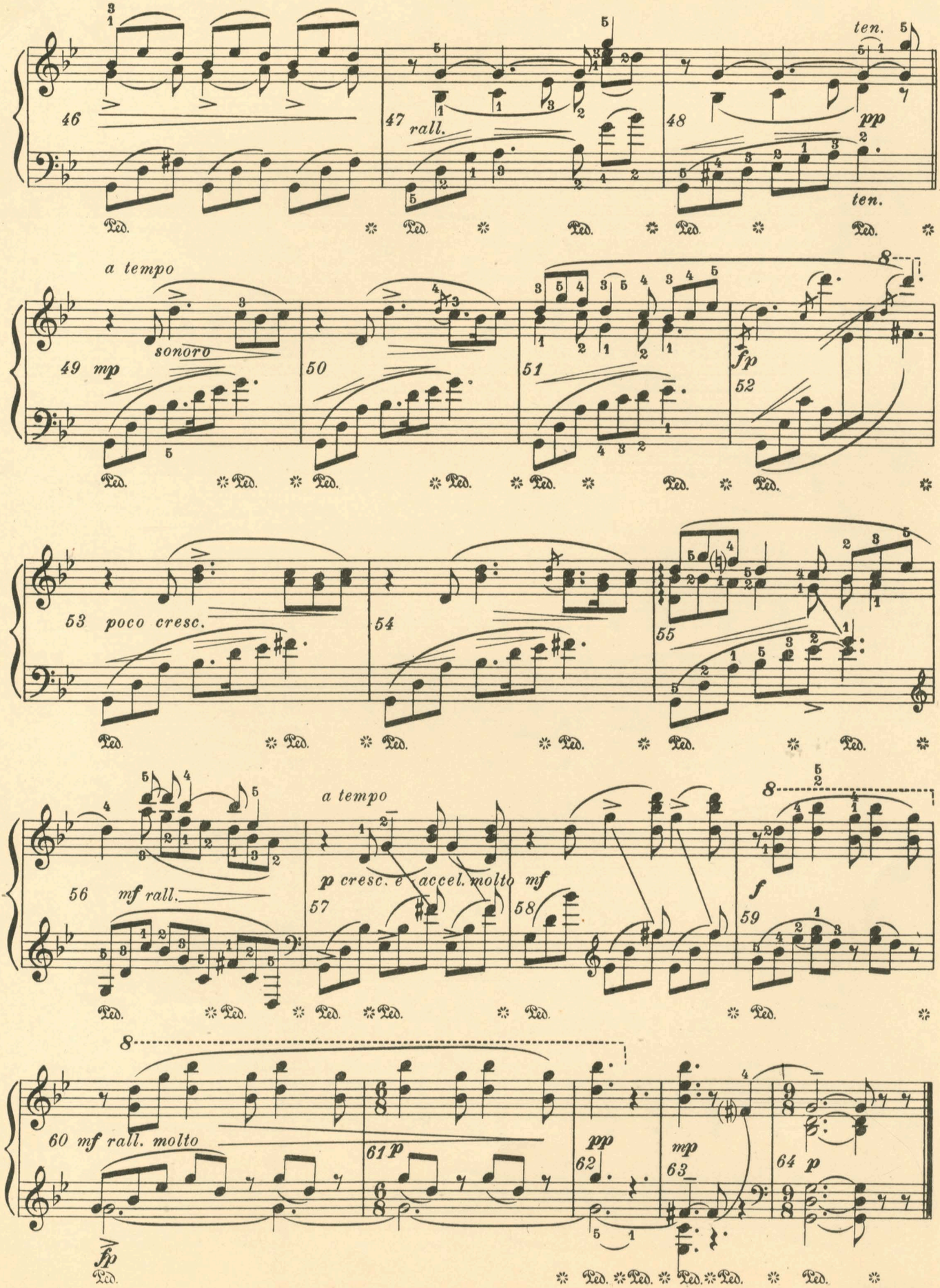

15 cresc.
16
17 p subito
18
19
p subito
20
riten.
a tempo
21 mf
22
23 mp
8
24
25
sonoro
26
27 mf
28 mp subito rubato
29 una corda
30 dim.
pp


31 mp
32 cresc.
33
34 mf
35
36
riten.
37 mp a tempo
38
L. H.
39 cresc.
40
41
mf
dim.
42
43 mp
44
45 p


46
47 rall.
48
ten.
pp
ten.
a tempo
49 mp
sonoro
50
51
fp
52
53 poco cresc.
54
55
56 mf rall.
a tempo
p cresc. e accel. molto
57
mf
58
f
59
60 mf rall. molto
61 p
62
pp
mp
63
64 p
fp

SUR L' EAU

RECITATION QUESTIONS

1. With what teachers in America did the composer study?
   Ans.

2. Who were his masters in Vienna?
   Ans.

3. In what city did he reside until the autumn of 1914?
   Ans.

4. Give a short sketch of the form of this composition.
   Ans.

5. Where does the first variation begin?
   Ans.

6. Analyze the harmony of m. 6.
   Ans.

7. What occurs harmonically in measures 31 and 32?
   Ans.

8. State the Esthetic Idea.
   Ans.

9. How is m. 17 to be interpreted?
   Ans.

10. Why is the sustained G in m. 60 given a strong accent?
    Ans.

11. Define *appoggiatura, coda, placido ma con moto.*
    Ans.

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